Sri Baba Ganeshananda Giri,
Suchindram, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

Info is given under following headings:

Greatness of the Baba.....location..his parents..his birth..childhood..young age...spiritual inclinations...His guru...sadhana...travels .. teachings...his temple or Ashram...his main disciples...miracles performed if any ..his written works... or discourses. or teachings.....present state of ashram and daily routines..donation info..any other relavent info..etc

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Ref: Google Gemini

Greatness of Baba Ganeshananda Giri

Shri Baba Ganeshananda Giri (1911–2016) occupies a unique place in modern spiritual history as one of the few contemporary saints who had direct physical *darshan* and lived in the personal care of **Shirdi Sai Baba** as a young child. Revered as a saint of profound humility, he lived for 104 years (some accounts state 108) as a living bridge between Shirdi Sai Baba's physical presence on earth and modern devotees across the world. Despite his spiritual stature, he never claimed personal guru-ship, consistently deflecting all veneration back to Shirdi Sai Baba and calling himself merely a humble servant.

Birth, Parents, Childhood, and Young Age

- **Birth & Location:** He was born on **December 19, 1911** (some traditions note 1908) in **Suchindram** (Susindram), near Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.
- **Parents:** Born into a devout family in South India, details of his biological parents remain sparse, as he was separated from them at a very tender age.
- **Childhood & Meeting Sai Baba:** Around the age of four, while visiting the Tirupati Balaji temple with his parents, young Ganeshananda got separated from his family in the crowds. Helpful travelers took him along, and through a series of events, he was brought to Shirdi. Shirdi Sai Baba took the orphaned child under His personal protection.
- **Life in Shirdi:** Young Ganeshananda spent over two and a half years (roughly 1915–1918) living in the Dwarkamai masjid alongside Sai Baba and a small group of children. He warmly recalled anecdotes from his childhood, including an incident where Baba gently slapped him for stealing a sweet from Baba's *jhola* (bag)—an act he cherished all his life as his greatest spiritual lesson on honesty.
- **Post-1918 Years:** Following Sai Baba's *Mahasamadhi* in October 1918, Ganeshananda remained in Shirdi for nearly 40 years doing *seva* (selfless service) at the Samadhi Mandir.

Spiritual Inclinations, His Guru, Sadhana, and Travels

- **His Guru: Shirdi Sai Baba** was his sole Master, Supreme Guru, and spiritual father.
- **Sadhana & Himalayan Renunciation:** Following inner instructions from Sai Baba, he eventually left Shirdi to embrace the life of a nomadic ascetic (*Parivrajaka*). He entered the **Dashanami Naga Sannyasa** tradition attached to the Juna Akhada in Varanasi, receiving the name *Baba Ganeshananda Giri*. He retreated to the Himalayas, spending several decades undertaking intense *tapasya* (penance), often meditating for 18 hours a day in isolation.
- **Nationwide Travels:** Following his period of austere penance, Sai Baba again commanded him in a vision to travel the country and spread the message of divine love, *dharma*, and righteousness. He traveled extensively on foot across North, West, and South India.

Teachings and Philosophy

Baba Ganeshananda Giri did not formulate a new doctrine; he lived and preached the core philosophy of Shirdi Sai Baba:

- **Shraddha & Saburi (Faith and Patience):** Complete surrender to the Divine and steadfast patience through life's trials.
- **Sabka Malik Ek (One God Governs All):** Unity of all religions and equal love for all living beings.
- **Egoless Devotion:** Total removal of ego through *Guru Bhakti* (devotion to the Guru) and selfless service.
- **Selfless Seva:** Serving the poor, feeding the hungry, and uplifting the downtrodden without expecting anything in return.

Works, Temples, Ashrams, and Disciples

- **Temple Construction:** Under Sai Baba's guidance, Babaji personally spearheaded and constructed **over 10 Shirdi Sai Baba temples** across various states, including Solan (Himachal Pradesh), Khambhat (Gujarat), and several regions in Tamil Nadu.
- **Sriperumbudur Temple & Ashram:** In his final years, he established a major Shirdi Sai Baba temple and spiritual center at **Sriperumbudur** (near Chennai, Tamil Nadu).
- **Main Disciples & Collaborators:** He worked with many dedicated devotees and trustees. In his final years, he formed a spiritual collaboration with **Mohanji** (a spiritual teacher connected to the Nath tradition), appointing him as Chief Advisor to the trust to ensure the continuity of the mission.
- **Jeeva Samadhi:** Baba Ganeshananda Giri attained *Jeeva Samadhi* on **April 29, 2016**, in Chennai. His sacred *Samadhi* is enshrined at the Sriperumbudur temple complex.

Miracles Performed

While Babaji never claimed credit for miracles—attributing everything solely to Sai Baba's grace—devotees witnessed numerous divine experiences:

- Spontaneous healings of chronic and terminal illnesses upon his blessings.
- Resolution of severe financial crises and family hardships for visiting devotees.
- Childless couples being blessed with children through his prayers to Sai Baba.
- Direct visions of Shirdi Sai Baba experienced by devotees in his presence.

Written Works and Discourses

- **Written Works:** Babaji did not write formal literary books; his life itself was his book. He preferred personal heart-to-heart communication over academic treatises.
- **Discourses:** He gave oral discourses and narrated firsthand stories of living with Shirdi Sai Baba. His talks focused on moral living, the power of *naam-smaran* (chanting God's name), and stories illustrating Sai Baba's boundless compassion.

Present State of Ashram, Daily Routines, and Donations

- **Present State:** The temple and ashram complex at **Sriperumbudur (Chennai, Tamil Nadu)** is actively managed by the official Trust set up by Babaji. It serves as a vibrant pilgrimage site for Sai devotees.
- **Daily Routines:** The shrine follows traditional Shirdi rituals, including the four daily *Aartis* (Kakad, Madhyan, Dhup, and Shej Aarti), continuous chanting of Sai Taraka Mantra, and *Dhuni Pooja*.
- **Annadan (Food Service):** True to Babaji's lifetime commitment, free food distribution (*Annadan*) is conducted daily for pilgrims and the underprivileged.
- **Donations:** The trust accepts voluntary donations specifically designated for charitable activities like *Annadan*, medical relief, temple maintenance, and educational support for poor children.

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Ref: GrokAI

Sri Baba Ganeshananda Giri, Suchindram, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

Baba Ganeshananda Giri (also known as Shri Siddheshwar Baba Ganeshananda Giri or Swami Ganeshananda Giri) was a Naga sadhu, parivrajaka (wandering renunciate), and lifelong devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba. He is remembered as one of the last individuals who lived with and walked alongside Sai Baba in Shirdi as a young child. He dedicated his long life to seva (service), spreading Sai Baba's message of love, kindness, and selflessness, and establishing temples without a commercial focus.

Greatness of the Baba

He embodied unwavering *bhakti* (devotion) and complete surrender to his Guru. Even after Sai Baba's *mahasamadhi* In 1918, he maintained constant communion—Sai Baba reportedly appeared to him physically or in visions and guided him daily (often noted around

6 a.m.). He lived as a living example of selflessness, attributing all achievements to Sai Baba rather than himself. Many devotees experienced him as an extension of Sai Baba's grace: problems dissolved, wishes were fulfilled, and lives transformed through his blessings. He remained vigorous and independent into advanced age (over 100), walking, traveling, and managing activities himself. His life illustrated mastery of the mind through pure devotion and service.

Location / Birth / Parents / Childhood

He was born in Suchindram (also spelled Suseendram), near Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. Sources vary slightly on the year: one cites 19 December 1911 (per his passport); others mention 1908. A sadhu once approached his parents seeking to take the boy for the path of Lord Murugan, but they refused.

Around age 3–4 (circa 1912), while visiting the Tirupati temple with his parents, he became separated from them. Kind strangers (including a Maharashtrian family in some accounts) helped him, and he eventually reached Shirdi. Sai Baba adopted him along with other children. He lived in and around Dwarkamai and was closely associated with Madhavrao Deshpande (Shama), who treated him like family and even provided clothes.

Young Age / Spiritual Inclinations / His Guru / Sadhana

From a very young age he lived with Sai Baba for roughly 2½–4 years until the *mahasamadhi* in October 1918. Childhood anecdotes include receiving a slap from Sai Baba after taking a sweet (he hid at Shama's house for days saying "the old man is beating me"), later reconciled with affection and more sweets; finding a coin while cleaning and being told to keep it; and observing Sai Baba's daily practices. These experiences instilled deep devotion and discipline.

His Guru was unequivocally Shirdi Sai Baba. After the *mahasamadhi*, he remained in Shirdi for nearly 40 years performing seva at the Samadhi Mandir. Later, on Sai Baba's instruction, he became a *parivrajaka* and Naga sadhu, spending time with the Juna Akhada in Varanasi and years in the Himalayas in intense *tapas* (sometimes over 18 hours a day). Sai Baba continued to guide him, once appearing to redirect his material wishes: "Your body is your home, the whole world is your bungalow, money is your brain… spread my love and kindness… I will always be with you."

Travels

After decades in Shirdi and Himalayan *tapas*, he traveled extensively across India as a nomadic sadhu, establishing Sai Baba temples and centers of seva in places including Solan (Himachal Pradesh), Khambhat (Gujarat), Delhi, and interiors of Tamil Nadu. In his final months he journeyed south to Tamil Nadu (his birth region) on Sai Baba's instruction to establish a temple and take *samadhi* there rather than in Shirdi.

Teachings

His core teaching was total devotion and surrender to Sai Baba (*Om Sai Sharanam Mama* — “I take refuge at the feet of Shri Sai” was a frequent chant associated with him). He emphasized *dharma*, selfless service (*seva*, especially *annadaan*/food distribution), maintaining the sanctity of temples without commercialization or greed, and living as an instrument of the Guru.
He shared childhood stories from Shirdi to illustrate faith, honesty, and reliance on the Guru. Practical guidance included focusing outward—“What else can I do for the world?”—and being fully available and selfless. He modeled that the body, mind, and actions are tools given by the Guru for service.

His Temple or Ashram / Present State and Daily Routines

He oversaw the construction of more than 10 (some accounts say at least 13) Sai Baba temples across India; each typically included regular *aartis*, *poojas*, *annadaan*, and social service.

In his final phase, following Sai Baba’s direction, he initiated a temple project near Sivan Koodal / Mel Mathuramangalam (Sriperumbudur area, Kanchipuram district, Tamil Nadu, roughly 90 minutes from Chennai).
A *bhoomi puja* was held in March 2016 with large attendance.
He attained *mahasamadhi* / *jeeva samadhi* on 29 April 2016 (reports vary slightly on exact age, commonly given as around 105–108). His *samadhi* is at the site; a Guru *pooja* later installed his favored Sai Baba idol and a Shiva Linga there.
Belongings (including items linked to Sai Baba such as a coin, cloth/langot piece, and a bronze vessel) were kept at the location.

A trust (Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust) was formed; he requested Mohanji to serve as Chief Advisor. Public information on detailed current daily routines is limited; the focus remains on the *samadhi* as a place of blessing, ongoing temple development (plans mentioned a tall Sai Baba temple structure), and continuation of seva activities in the spirit of his mission. Visitors have reported strong vibrations or experiences at the *samadhi*.

Main Disciples

He did not establish a large formal monastic lineage in the conventional sense. Close associates in later years included trustees of Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust (e.g., S.K. Vasan and others) and a deep, short but significant connection with the spiritual teacher Mohanji and his circle, who supported the final temple project. Devotees and those involved in the temples he founded continued his work of seva and devotion.

Miracles Performed (if any)

Devotees reported healing (e.g., of chronic seizures), blessing childless couples with children, turning around struggling businesses, rapid recovery of the ailing, mind-reading or solving problems without being asked, and transforming skeptics into believers. His presence and *prasad* (including food he cooked) were experienced as vehicles of Sai

Baba's grace. After *samadhi*, experiences of movement or energy from the *samadhi* and continued guidance have been described.

Written Works / Discourses / Teachings

No major formal books or extensive published discourses by him are widely documented. His teachings were primarily oral—stories from his time with Sai Baba, guidance on devotion and seva, and personal instruction.
A book titled *The Boy Who Walked With Sai Baba* (published by Gurulight / associated with Mohanji Foundation) compiles accounts of his life and testimonials from devotees. Chants and remembrance practices centered on Sai Baba (notably *Om Sai Sharanam Mama*) are associated with him.

Donation Info / Any Other Relevant Info

Specific current donation channels are not detailed in widely available public sources; support historically went toward temple construction and seva activities via the trust and associates involved in the Sriperumbudur project. Contact through organizations linked to the trust or related spiritual groups (such as those connected with Mohanji's work on the project) would be the practical route for inquiries.

He preserved personal relics linked to Sai Baba (British-era coin, piece of cloth/langot, soil, bronze vessel) as treasures and sometimes shared fragments as blessings for major donations.
He lived simply as a Naga sadhu, cooked for devotees, and remained focused on practical service rather than institutional grandeur.
His life stands as a bridge to the direct presence of Shirdi Sai Baba and an example of lifelong, single-pointed *guru-bhakti*.

Om Sai Ram. Information is drawn primarily from contemporary accounts by those who met him (including Mohanji's writings), news reports around his *mahasamadhi*, and related spiritual publications. Minor variations exist across sources on exact birth year and some chronological details, as is common with oral spiritual biographies.

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Ref: ClaudeAI

Sri Baba Ganeshananda Giri, Suchindram, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

Here's what's documented about Baba Ganeshananda Giri (also called "Babaji" or "Shri Siddheshwar Baba Ganeshananda Giri"), a devotee who as a child lived with Shirdi Sai Baba himself.

Greatness / Who he was

Described as a Naga sadhu, parivrajaka (wandering monk), guru, and social worker who lived to 106 years, (The Awakening Times) he is remembered above all as a staunch devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba who, as a young boy, lived with Baba in Shirdi and then spent the rest of his life spreading Baba's universal message across India. (The Awakening Times)

Birth, parents, childhood

He was born in Suchindram, Tamil Nadu, on 19 December 1911. When he was under 4 years old, he was separated from his parents at Tirupati (The Awakening Times) (the Venkateshwara temple town). With the help of kind strangers, moving from place to place, he eventually reached Shirdi (The Awakening Times) — no further detail on his birth parents survives in available accounts.

Time with Sai Baba (his "Guru")

He spent over two and a half years living with and walking alongside Sai Baba, a phase that shaped the purpose of his life's mission. (The Awakening Times) Anecdotes recount him as one of the children who gathered around Baba daily; a famous story tells of him once stealing a sweet from Baba's bag, being slapped (the only time Baba is said to have struck anyone), running away, then being called back and forgiven. Even after Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi in 1918, Baba continued appearing to him — sometimes physically, sometimes in visions — guiding him at every step. (The Awakening Times)

Sadhana and travels

After Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi, Babaji spent nearly 40 years in Shirdi doing seva and working at the Samadhi mandir. Then, on Sai Baba's instructions, he left for the Himalayas, became a parivrajaka and Naga sadhu, and spent time with the Juna Akhada in Varanasi, practicing tapas sometimes for over 18 hours a day. (The Awakening Times) Later, Baba again directed him to travel across India spreading his message.

Temples / his mission

He presided over the construction of more than ten Sai Baba temples across India — from Solan (Himachal Pradesh) to Khambhat (Gujarat) and various places in Tamil Nadu — each

functioning as a seva center with annadaan (food service) and regular poojas. (The Awakening Times)
His final and largest project was a Sai Baba temple at Sriperumbudur, outside Chennai — envisioned as a divine order from Shirdi Sai Baba himself. (Premaarpan)

Relics and miracles

He preserved personal keepsakes from Baba — a loin cloth Baba once threw at him, a silver one-rupee coin from the British era, and soil Baba had walked on — pieces of the cloth were given as blessings to major temple donors. (The Awakening Times) Devotees reported him reading their minds and solving problems unasked; childless couples conceived, failing businesses recovered, and the ill regained health through his blessings, much as through prayer to Sai Baba himself. (The Awakening Times)

Main disciple / successor

He founded the Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust to carry forward the Sriperumbudur temple project, appointing spiritual teacher Mohanji as Chief Advisor to the trust. (Premaarpan) He told Mohanji: "Sai Baba is with you... Baba guided me to you. So it's all one family." (The Awakening Times)

Mahasamadhi and present state

He launched the temple project with a grand Bhoomi Pooja in March 2016, and attained Mahasamadhi in April 2016 — the Sriperumbudur site now also houses his Samadhi shrine. (Premaarpan) Forty-eight days later, a Guru Pooja installed his favorite Sai Baba idol and a Shiva Linga atop his Samadhi; devotees have since reported feeling strong vibrations there, which he had predicted, saying he would remain active in subtle (sookshma) form after death. (The Awakening Times.

Written works

No standalone books authored by him were found; his life story is documented in "The Boy Who Walked with Sai Baba," published by Gurulight, drawn from his own oral narrations.

Ashram / donation info

Current daily-routine and donation details for the Sriperumbudur temple/trust aren't reliably available from public sources I could access (the trust's own website blocks automated access). For up-to-date visiting hours, aarti timings, or donation procedures, I'd suggest checking the Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust directly — their Facebook page (Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust, Sriperumbudur) or contacting them, or reaching out via Mohanji Foundation, which remains closely associated with the trust.

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Ref: perplexityAI

Sri Baba Ganeshananda Giri, Suchindram, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

Greatness of the Baba

Baba Ganeshananda Giri is revered as a rare saintly personality whose life remained inseparably connected with Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi [1][2]. Devotees remember him not merely as a preacher, but as a living embodiment of surrender, humility, and remembrance of the Guru [1][2]. His greatness lies in the fact that he spoke less of himself and more of Sai Baba, allowing his very life to become a testimony of bhakti and self-effacement [1]. For devotees, he stood as a bridge between the sacred past of Shirdi and the living devotion of later generations [1][3].

Birth and Early Life

According to published accounts, he was born in Suchindram, Tamil Nadu, on 19 December 1911, though some reports vary slightly on the year [2][3]. His early life was marked by separation from his parents at a very young age, around the age of four, during a visit to Tirupati [2][3]. One account says he had already been destined for a spiritual path from birth, with elders and seers sensing that his life would not be ordinary [1]. The loss and displacement of childhood later became part of the larger divine story through which he came to Sai Baba [2][3].

Childhood and Youth

As a small boy, he was rescued by a Maharashtrian family and brought to Shirdi, where he came under the care of Shirdi Sai Baba [2][3]. He is said to have lived in Sai Baba's presence for about two and a half years, absorbing the atmosphere of Dwarkamai, service, discipline, and surrender [2]. One well-known incident tells how Baba once gave him sweets from his bag, and after the boy took them without full understanding, Baba gently corrected him; the child then ran away for a few days before being lovingly brought back [1][2]. These early years shaped his entire inner life and fixed his heart permanently at Sai Baba's feet [1].

Spiritual Inclinations

His spiritual inclination is described as natural, deep, and lifelong [1][2]. Even after leaving childhood behind, he continued to live with the memory and presence of Sai Baba as the guiding force of his life [2]. He is remembered as someone who could feel Baba's direction inwardly and act with that trust, rather than with worldly calculation [1]. His life suggests not a sudden conversion, but a continuous unfolding of devotion from early childhood to old age [1][3].

Guru and Sadhana

Shirdi Sai Baba was his principal Guru, and Baba's grace remained the core of his identity [1][2]. Later, he embraced the life of a Naga sadhu in the Shri Panchadashanam Juna Akhara and lived as a renunciate devoted to sadhana, discipline, and spiritual service [1][2]. His sadhana appears to have included japa, austerity, travel, silence, remembrance of the Guru, and temple service [1][2]. He was known to repeat and live by the Sai ideal of surrender, and a mantra associated with him is "Om Shri Sai Sharanam mama" [1].

Travels and Spiritual Mission

After his early Shirdi association, he travelled widely across India, carrying the message of Sai Baba wherever he went [1][2]. Accounts mention his presence in several northern and Himalayan regions, where he spent long periods in spiritual wandering and austerity [2]. He also made repeated visits to Shirdi, treating it as his spiritual home and point of inner return [1][2]. Through travel, satsang, and personal example, he spread a simple but powerful message: remember Sai Baba, surrender to Baba, and live in devotion [1].

Teachings

His teachings were not presented in a highly systematized philosophical form; rather, they emerged through his conduct, speech, and example [1][2]. The central themes were devotion, humility, surrender, service, and faith in the Guru [1]. He repeatedly emphasized that all glory belongs to Sai Baba, not to the individual devotee, and that spiritual life must be grounded in selflessness [1]. In this sense, his teachings were devotional rather than theoretical, and practical rather than argumentative [1][2].

Temple and Ashram Work

He is credited with helping to establish more than a dozen Sai Baba temples in different parts of India, including Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu [3]. His final major wish was to build a grand Sai Baba temple in his native land near Sriperumbudur/Sivan Koodal, and accounts say that he chose that place for his mahasamadhi or jeeva samadhi [1][3]. The temple project reportedly included features inspired by Shirdi, such as Dwarkamai, Chawadi, and Lendi Bagh, creating a sacred environment for devotees [1][2]. His temple work shows that his devotion was not limited to prayer alone; it took shape in architecture, sacred space, and community service [1][3].

Main Disciples and Associates

Publicly available material does not provide a single fixed list of principal disciples, but several names appear repeatedly in connection with his later life and temple mission [1][3]. Mohanji is one of the best-known associates and writers who documented his life and teachings [1][4][5]. Trustees and devotees connected with the Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust and the Sriperumbudur temple project also played important roles in his final years [3]. Rather than a guru surrounded by formal institutions, he appears as a saint surrounded by devotees, trustees, volunteers, and seekers drawn by faith [1][3].

Miracles and Special Events

Devotional sources attribute several miracle-like events to him, though these are best understood as faith accounts rather than independently verified historical records [1][3]. He is said to have possessed or preserved sacred relics connected with Sai Baba, including a coin, a piece of cloth, and a vessel associated with Baba [3]. Some devotees also reported healing and protection through his blessings, and one trustee is said to have been cured of seizures after his intervention [3]. His deeper “miracle,” however, was the sheer consistency of his devotion and the way he inspired faith in others [1][3].

Written Works and Discourses

There is no clearly documented major published book authored by him in the available sources [1][2]. His teachings appear mainly to have been transmitted through oral discourse, personal instruction, and the recollections of devotees [1][5]. Later writings and videos about him preserve many of his sayings, life stories, and devotional emphasis [1][6]. For an ebook, it is safest to present him as a saint whose **spoken teachings and lived example** were more prominent than literary output [1][2].

Present State of the Ashram

He attained jeeva samadhi on 29 April 2016, and later reports say his samadhi place became the focal point for continued devotion and temple development [3]. His belongings were reportedly preserved at Sivan Koodal, and plans were associated with a Sai Baba temple there [3]. Devotees speak of his presence continuing in the sacred atmosphere of the shrine, although this belongs to devotional testimony rather than formal documentation [2][3]. The present condition of the ashram or temple complex may have changed since those reports, so any final publication should verify current administrative details from the managing trust [3].

Daily Routine and Way of Life

In his later life, his routine appears to have been simple, austere, and devoted to the service of visitors and Sai worship [1][2]. He was known for receiving devotees, guiding them spiritually, and encouraging them to keep Sai Baba constantly in remembrance [1]. His day was likely shaped by japa, conversation with seekers, temple-related work, and periods of seclusion or travel [1][2]. He lived like a renunciate, but with the warmth of a householder saint who welcomed all with grace [1].

Donation and Support

I did not find a clearly verified public donation page or official donation account specifically for Baba Ganeshananda Giri’s current temple/ashram setup in the sources reviewed [1][2][3]. The available material does show that the temple and samadhi-related work depended on devotees, trustees, and voluntary support [3]. For publication purposes, it is better to mention donations only if you have a direct notice from the current trust or management [3]. That will keep your write-up both respectful and accurate [1][3].

Closing Note

Baba Ganeshananda Giri's life may be understood as a life of **Sai remembrance made visible** [1][2]. He moved from the vulnerability of childhood to the dignity of renunciation, from private devotion to public temple service, and from personal silence to a legacy that still inspires seekers [1][3]. For devotional writing, his biography can be presented as the story of a child taken by grace, a saint shaped by surrender, and a servant who never allowed his own name to overshadow the name of Sai Baba [1][2].

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Ref: AI Overview

Sri Baba Ganeshananda Giri (c. 1911 – 29 April 2016), also known as Babaji, was a **revered Indian saint and one of the last known direct child disciples who lived and walked with Shirdi Sai Baba**. [1, 2, 3]

Early Life and Connection to Shirdi Sai Baba

- **Birth and Separation:** Born on 19 December 1911 in Suchindram, Tamil Nadu, he was separated from his parents at Tirupati before turning four.
- **Reaching Shirdi:** Guided by kind strangers, he arrived in Shirdi and found shelter under Shirdi Sai Baba, living and walking with Him for over two and a half years until Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi in 1918. [1, 4]

Spiritual Journey and Service

- **Life as a Wanderer:** He spent decades as a *parivrajaka* (wandering sanyasi), traveling across India and through the Himalayas.
- **Temple Building:** He dedicated his life to spreading Shirdi Sai Baba's message of love, faith (*shraddha*), and patience (*saburi*), helping build multiple temples.
- **Final Project:** He initiated the construction of a grand Shirdi Sai Baba temple at Sriperumbudur near Chennai, which served as his final resting place before he attained Mahasamadhi on 29 April 2016 at the age of 104. [2, 3]

If you'd like, I can share more about his teachings, details from the book chronicling his life (*The Boy Who Walked with Sai Baba*), or **how his final temple project was completed**.
AI responses may include mistakes.

[1] https://www.amazon.in/Boy-who-walked-Sai-Baba/dp/8193309146
[2] https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/adopted-at-4-by-shirdi-sai-man-dies-at-108/articleshow/52216937.cms
[3] https://spiritualpracticecalendar.wordpress.com/2023/04/28/babaji-ganeshananda-giri-maharajs-mahasamadhi/
[4] https://awakeningtimes.com/baba-ganeshananda-giri-an-introduction/

Core Teachings of Baba Ganeshananda Giri

Baba Ganeshananda Giri's teachings focused completely on the path of **unconditional love, total acceptance, and absolute surrender** to the guru. He did not lecture on complex philosophical theories; instead, he taught through the simple, direct standard set by Shirdi Sai Baba: [1, 2]

- **Living Love:** He demonstrated a total lack of judgment, embracing every visitor with childlike affection and warmth. [1]
- **Faith & Patience:** He continually reminded people of Sai Baba's core pillars: *Shraddha* (faith) and *Saburi* (patience). [3, 4, 5]
- **Fearlessness:** He gave devotees peace of mind by constantly saying, *"I am with you. Sai Baba is with you too. Do not worry about anything."* [1, 6]
- **Guru Seva:** Having spent over 40 years serving at the Shirdi Samadhi Mandir, his life proved that steady devotion to a guru is the ultimate spiritual practice. [7]

The Final Temple Project at Sriperumbudur

The grand Shirdi Sai Baba temple at **Sriperumbudur (near Chennai)** was Babaji's final mega-project, undertaken due to an explicit divine instruction from Shirdi Sai Baba Himself. [8, 9, 10]

- **The Divine Order:** Originally, Babaji wanted his final resting place to be in Shirdi. However, Sai Baba appeared to him and commanded him to travel to Chennai, build a massive temple there, and establish his samadhi at that location instead. [1, 11]
- **Master Organizer:** Even past the age of 100, Babaji lived on-site in a tiny cottage (*kutir*) to oversee the initial stages and direct materials like steel, gravel, and cement. He established the **Shri Dattatreya Siva Sai Trust** to ensure the temple operations would continue smoothly for generations. [2, 11, 12, 13]
- **Passing the Torch:** Knowing his time on earth was short, Babaji formed a tight spiritual bond with **Brahmarishi Mohanji**. He formally requested Mohanji to lay the foundation stone and appointed him as the Chief Advisor of the trust to guide the project forward. [1, 2, 8, 11, 13]
- **His Final Resting Place:** Shortly after initiating the grand *Bhoomi Pooja* (groundbreaking ceremony), Babaji attained Mahasamadhi on 29 April 2016. Today, his physical **Samadhi shrine sits right next to the active temple construction site**, remaining a powerful vortex of blessings and a living testament to his vision. [9, 12]

Would you like to know more about his physical meetings with **Mohanji**, or read about the **miracles and stories** from his early childhood days spent walking with Shirdi Sai Baba?

[1] https://mohanji.org
[2] https://awakeningtimes.com
[3] https://www.riotmaterial.com

[4] https://sociology.institute
[5] https://shirdibooks.com
[6] https://www.facebook.com
[7] https://awakeningtimes.com
[8] https://www.facebook.com
[9] https://spiritualpracticecalendar.wordpress.com
[10] https://premaarpan.wordpress.com
[11] https://www.facebook.com
[12] https://premaarpan.wordpress.com
[13] https://mohanjichronicles.com

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The childhood and spiritual journey of Baba Ganeshananda Giri are filled with deeply moving stories, small incidents of divine discipline, and long-lasting miracles. These accounts are prominently preserved through oral traditions and in the biography titled The Boy Who Walked with Sai Baba. [1]

Stories from Dwarkamai (1915–1918)

When Babaji arrived in Shirdi as a tiny, four-year-old orphan, he found a family with Shirdi Sai Baba and his close devotee, Madhavrao Deshpande (famously known as Shama). Shama treated him like his own child, providing him clothes and shelter. [2, 3]

- **The Candy Theft and Slap:** One day, Shirdi Sai Baba brought a bag of sweets and began distributing candies to all the neighborhood children. For some reason, He bypassed little Ganeshananda. Upset and hungry for candy, the little boy waited until Sai Baba looked away, slipped his hand into the bag, and took one. Sai Baba caught him and instantly gave him a sharp slap across the face. [2]
- **The "Budda Maarte Hain" Protest:** Crying and furious, the boy ran back to Shama's house, declaring he would never return to the Dwarkamai mosque because *"Budda maarte hain"* (The old man beats me!). A couple of days later, Sai Baba noticed his absence and asked Shama where the "South Indian boy" was. When Shama explained that the boy was hiding out of fear, Sai Baba laughed heartily and said, *"If he steals, I will beat him again! But go, tell him to come back here."* This rough, loving discipline was Sai Baba's way of burning away negative tendencies early. [2, 4]
- **The Chavadi Processions:** Old photographs and traditions from Shirdi show a small, young South Indian boy holding the ceremonial staff on the left side of Sai Baba during the historic night processions to the Chavadi. That boy was young Ganeshananda Giri. [5]

Miracles of Guidance and Lifelong Vision

The primary miracle of Babaji's life was his lifelong, unbroken line of communication with Shirdi Sai Baba, which continued for nearly a century after Sai Baba's physical passing. [6]

- **The Daily 6:00 AM Conversations:** Even past the age of 100, Babaji woke up to a miraculous reality. Every single morning at precisely 6:00 AM, Shirdi Sai Baba would manifest to him—either through clear internal visions or physical auditory speech—to guide his movements, dictate temple building steps, and give instructions. [6, 7]
- **Sai Baba's Reality Check on Material Desires:** During his early years of intense wandering, Babaji once asked Sai Baba for material comfort, a grand mansion, servants, and wealth. Sai Baba appeared to him, pointed directly at Babaji's own physical form, and delivered a profound revelation:
  "This body is your grand mansion. Your two legs are your vehicles. Your two hands are your army of servants. Your brain is your wealth. I have already given you everything. Now, go out into the world and spread my true message to people who are spiritually asleep."
  From that day forward, Babaji never sought material possessions again, living with absolute zero deviation from his master.
  [7, 8]
- **The Protection of Mohanji's Devotees:** Babaji was famously strict and built like an "armor tank" when it came to discipline, rarely allowing visitors to touch his feet or physical body. However, after meeting Brahmarishi Mohanji, Sai Baba explicitly told Babaji in a vision: *"Mohanji's people are my children. Take care of them and let them do what they want."* From then on, Babaji showered Mohanji's followers with an unprecedented, sweet, childlike affection, allowing them to hug him, play with him, and care for him freely. [9, 10, 11]

Would you like to explore more about **how Babaji spent his 40 years serving at the Shirdi Samadhi Mandir**, or read about his years as a **Himalayan Naga Sadhu**? [12]

[1] https://www.amazon.in
[2] https://awakeningtimes.com
[3] https://www.instagram.com
[4] https://visitshirdi.com
[5] https://mohanjichronicles.com
[6] https://awakeningtimes.com
[7] https://mohanji.org
[8] https://mohanji.org
[9] https://mohanjichronicles.com
[10] https://mohanjichronicles.com
[11] https://mohanji.org
[12] https://awakeningtimes.com

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After Shirdi Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi in 1918, Baba Ganeshananda Giri left Shirdi as a young boy and spent decades wandering India. He eventually initiated into the *Naga* tradition, an ancient and austere sect of warrior-ascetics dedicated to extreme renunciation. [1, 2]

Initiation and Life in the Himalayas

- **Joining the Akhara:** He joined the **Anand Akhara**, one of the oldest and most respected monastic orders of Naga sadhus.
- **Severe Austerities:** For years, Babaji lived in the freezing heights of the Himalayas, including regions like Gangotri and Badrinath. He practiced *tapas* (intense meditation) completely naked, covered only in sacred ash (*bhasma*), defying extreme sub-zero temperatures. [3]
- **The Living Siddha:** Through these rigorous physical and mental disciplines, he gained mastery over his body and mind, attaining the state of a *Siddha* (perfected master).

Physical Transformation and Traits

- **The Naga Gaze:** Decades of Himalayan practice left him with incredibly piercing, intense eyes. Devotees often noted that his gaze could look right through a person, instantly reading their past, present, and future karmas.
- **Fiery Discipline:** True to the Naga tradition, he maintained a fierce, uncompromising outer demeanor. He had a zero-tolerance policy for insincerity, pretension, or spiritual laziness, often using harsh words to shatter the egos of visitors. [4]
- **The Soft Core:** Beneath this rough, terrifying "Naga exterior" lay the gentle, childlike heart of the boy who had walked with Shirdi Sai Baba. Those who looked past his fierce outer shell found boundless, unconditional love.

Transition Back to Society

- **The Divine Order:** After decades in isolation, Shirdi Sai Baba appeared to him and commanded him to leave the Himalayas. Sai Baba told him that his intense energies were needed back in the material world to heal, guide, and awaken suffering people.
- **The Royal Guard:** Even after returning to society and wearing clothes again, Babaji maintained his Naga status. During the massive Kumbh Mela festivals, he was given the highest respect, marching at the front of the Anand Akhara royal processions (*Shahi Snan*).

Detail his 40 years of quiet service back at the Shirdi Samadhi Mandir:

[1] https://www.amazon.in
[2] https://www.facebook.com
[3] https://www.thehindu.com
[4] https://www.amazon.in

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Following Shirdi Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi in October 1918, young Ganeshananda did not immediately run away to the mountains. Instead, **he stayed back in the holy village, dedicating nearly 40 years of his life to quiet, unassuming service (*seva*) at the Shri Sai Baba Samadhi Mandir**. [1, 2]

This chapter of his life was defined by absolute humility, manual labor, and transition into adulthood under the unseen eye of his master.

Guarding the Physical Presence

- **Living as a Temple Anchor:** After his childhood years of walking with Sai Baba, Babaji chose to stay in Shirdi to help guard and maintain the energy of the newly constructed Samadhi shrine. He lived a very simple life, eating whatever temple prasad or alms came his way. [1]
- **Maintaining the Mandir:** Long before Shirdi became a global pilgrimage site managed by a massive trust, it was maintained by a tiny group of dedicated close followers. Babaji spent his days performing manual tasks: cleaning the temple premises, managing the crowds of early visitors, arranging materials for daily pujas, and ensuring the sanctity of the main hall. [3, 4]
- **The Invisible Bond:** Even though Sai Baba was no longer in his physical body, Babaji later recounted that these 40 years did not feel lonely. Sai Baba frequently communicated with him through dreams, sudden visual flashes, and deep internal commands, directing exactly how his service should be performed. [1]

The Command to Leave Shirdi

- **The Comfort of the Shrine:** Over four decades, Shirdi became Babaji's entire universe. He expected to spend the rest of his days serving right there at the feet of his master's marble statue.
- **A Sudden Order:** Unexpectedly, after nearly 40 years of steady temple service, Sai Baba broke the routine. He appeared to Babaji in a powerful vision and gave a definitive command: *"Your service here is complete. Now, pack your things, leave Shirdi, and go to the North."* [1]
- **The Leap of Faith:** Absolute surrender meant asking no questions. Trusting the divine word completely, Babaji packed his few belongings, walked out of the Shirdi temple gates, and traveled to the Himalayas. It was this very exit from Shirdi that led him directly to his initiation as a fiery Naga Sadhu. [1, 5]

Would you like to know more about **how the Shirdi temple functioned** during those early decades (the 1920s to 1950s), or should we discuss **the specific books and accounts** where you can read more first-hand devotee experiences?

[1] https://awakeningtimes.com
[2] https://www.google.com

[3] https://www.google.com
[4] https://www.google.com
[5] https://www.instagram.com

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Ref: awakeningtimes.com

Baba Ganeshananda Giri – An Introduction

January 15, 2017

Naga sadhu. *Parivrajaka* (nomadic sanyasi). Guru. Friend. Grandfather. Social worker. Master Chef.

Any number of these appellations would hold equally true for a saint that walked this Earth for 106 long years. But above all these roles he played, the truest description of **Shri Siddheshwar Baba Ganeshananda Giri** is as a staunch devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba. As a young boy, he lived with Baba in Shirdi. He then spent the rest of his life working tirelessly to spread His universal messages across India.

Ganeshananda Giri was born in Suchindram, Tamil Nadu on 19th December, 1911. When he was still under 4 years old, Babaji was separated from his parents at Tirupati (site of a holy

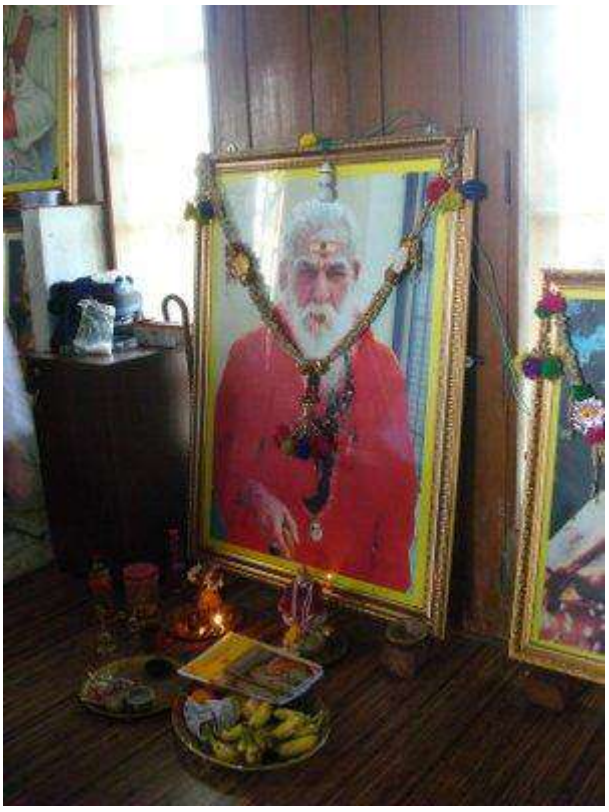
temple for Lord Venkatesha, a form of Lord Vishnu). With the help of some kind strangers, moving from one place to another, he finally reached Shirdi. He spent over two and a half years living with and walking with Sai Baba. This phase of his life laid the foundations for and clarified the purpose of his life's mission. Even after Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi in 1918, He appeared to him from time to time, sometimes physically and at others through visions. Baba spoke and guided him at every step.

After Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi, Babaji spent nearly 40 years in Shirdi doing *seva* (service) and working at the Samadhi mandir. Then, upon Sai Baba's instructions, he left for the Himalayas and became a *parivrajaka* (nomadic sanyasi). He became a Naga sadhu and spent time with the Juna Akhada in Varanasi. He spent years doing *tapas* (penance), sometimes beyond 18 hours a day. After several years in this mode, Baba again asked him to travel and spread his message to people all across India.

Babaji would share several stories and anecdotes from his life to guide people on the right path, the path of *dharma* (righteousness) and God. The most interesting stories were from his childhood in Shirdi. He was part of a group of children that would flock around Baba everyday. Baba would give out sweets to all the children after his procession, but one day, he missed giving it to Babaji. In anger, the young Babaji stole a sweet from Baba's *jhola* (bag). Unfortunately, Baba saw it and slapped him for his misdemeanor. Baba never beat anybody and he was the first person that Baba slapped. In anger, Babaji ran away to Shama's house and didn't come to Dwarkamai for 4 days, saying "The old man is beating me. I won't go there." Finally Baba called him back and spoke to him with affection, but also warned him to never steal again! This episode inspired Babaji to give chocolates to visitors,

whenever someone came to seek his blessings.
Another time, after Sai Baba left his body, Babaji cried out to Him to fulfill his wishes. In his prayers, he asked for lots of money, a big car, a good house, servants and all sorts of facilities. He took a flower from the Samadhi and took it home. But nothing happened and he was soon disappointed. One day, when Babaji was walking through the streets of Shirdi, he saw Sai Baba walking ahead of him! Baba turned and looked at him. “You think I’m dead? Here I am! You want a car and a bungalow, money and all that? OK, your body is your home, whole world is your bungalow, and your brain is your money. I am with you and you should be spreading my love and kindness in the world with your own life. Everywhere you will feel my hand and support and I will always be with you”.

It is well known that Sai Baba would go to a well and draw water from it to water plants and flowers. Baba would also use the water for his bath. He would take his intestines out, clean them and dry them. He would also dry out his *langot* (loin cloth) on the fence. Once Babaji saw this and laughed at Sai Baba. Sai Baba scolded him in Hindi, made His loin cloth into a ball of cloth and threw it on Babaji. Babaji said “I still have that loin cloth with me. When someone donates in lakhs for a temple, I give them a bit of that loin cloth as a blessing”. Babaji also has other gifts from Sai Baba that he has preserved as treasures, like a silver one-rupee coin he received from Baba (this coin was printed in the British era and has been preserved in Babaji’s altar) and some soil that Baba had walked on.



Babaji presided over the construction of more than 10 Sai Baba temples across India. Each temple became a centre for seva as well, conducting regular annadaan (food seva) and other social service activities, besides *aartis* and other ritual *poojas*. From Solan

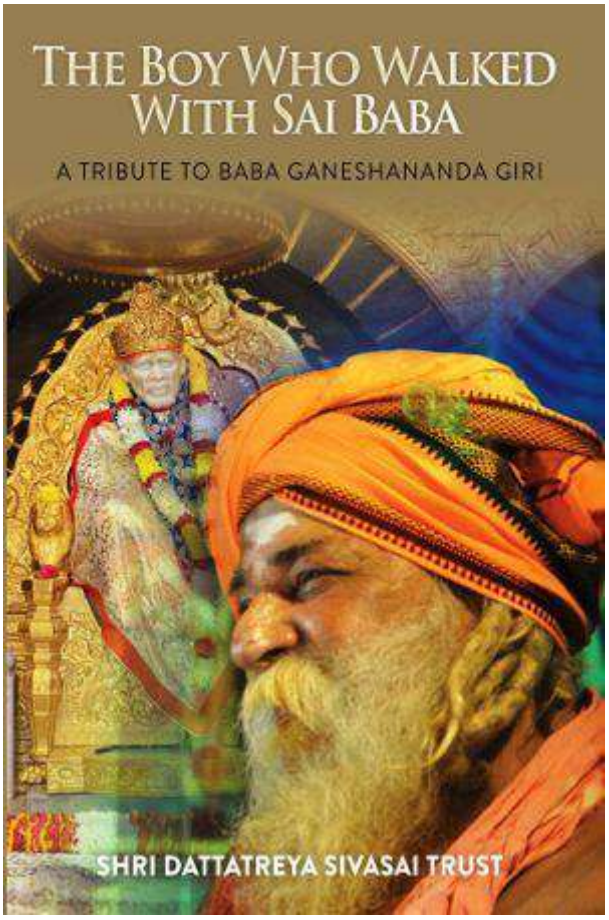
(Himachal Pradesh) to Khambhat (Gujarat) and to the interiors of Tamil Nadu, Babaji's work touched the lives of many people across India.

Babaji would never take centre stage or credit for anything. He would always attribute everything to his guru Shirdi Sai Baba and describe himself as just His devotee. No wonder many saw him as Sai Baba himself and found their wishes coming true and their problems dissolving, just as they would upon praying to Sai Baba. Babaji's blessings transformed people's lives. Childless couples were blessed with children, struggling businesses turned around, ailing patients regained their health quickly. People straying from the path of dharma were brought back to the path of divinity, and agnostics turned into believers. Many people experienced his ability to read their minds and solve their problems without even asking him. Several others were lucky to partake of food lovingly cooked by Babaji himself, food verily given as prasad from Sai Baba Himself!

Even at the ripe age of 106, Babaji was a force unto himself. He would walk with great vigour, travel alone and handle all of his activities on his own. He was a perfect instrument of Sai Baba, driven by purpose and relentlessly pushing forward to fulfill his life's mission. Babaji wanted to leave his body in Shirdi, but Sai Baba had other plans in store for him.

Baba wanted him to build a final temple in Chennai and asked him to attain his Samadhi there. Baba also orchestrated a divine collaboration with Shri Mohanji, a spiritual Master deeply connected to Sai Baba, the Nath and Siddha traditions. Babaji and Mohanji met in Shirdi in December 2015 and a deep bond was established. Babaji and Mohanji met several times in the next few months, while Mohanji and his followers got deeply involved in supporting Babaji's mission. Babaji launched the temple with great fanfare through a spectacular Bhoomi Pooja function in March 2016. Support poured in from all directions, as did devotees – the function saw nearly 10,000 devotees stream in on a working day in a small village 90 minutes outside Chennai city; a clear pointer to Divine Grace propelling the project!

Babaji was not only a spiritual guru but also a master planner and organizer. He wanted the temple activities to continue smoothly even in his absence. To this effect, he set up a trust, in which he asked Mohanji to take on the role of Chief Advisor, while a group of other associates took on various execution related responsibilities. In a way, he bequeathed his spiritual role in the trust to Mohanji so that he could guide the trust members to fulfill their responsibilities in service of Baba. As Mohanji says, Babaji told him "Sai Baba is with you. Baba trusts you. Baba guided me to you. So it's all one family".



Om Sairam!

Edited except from the book "The Boy who walked with Sai Baba", published by Gurulight.

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Ref: mohanjichronicles.com

The Boy who Walked with Sai Baba – Shadows of Grace – Part I

By Rajesh Kamath

Baba Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj

Relationships – the basic ingredients to cook the drama of human existence on planet Earth served uniquely with its tantalising and varying flavors of emotions to each person in a gourmet feast, called life. The strength of a relationship in a particular lifetime is usually determined by the longevity of the association. However once in a long while, there are certain relationships that, though brief and fleeting in association, leave lasting impressions. Mohanji's (and by extension the community's) association with Baba Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj (respectfully and lovingly addressed by Mohanji as Babaji) was one such relationship. The deep and enduring love and respect that it fostered belied the fact that our association lasted all of 4 months.

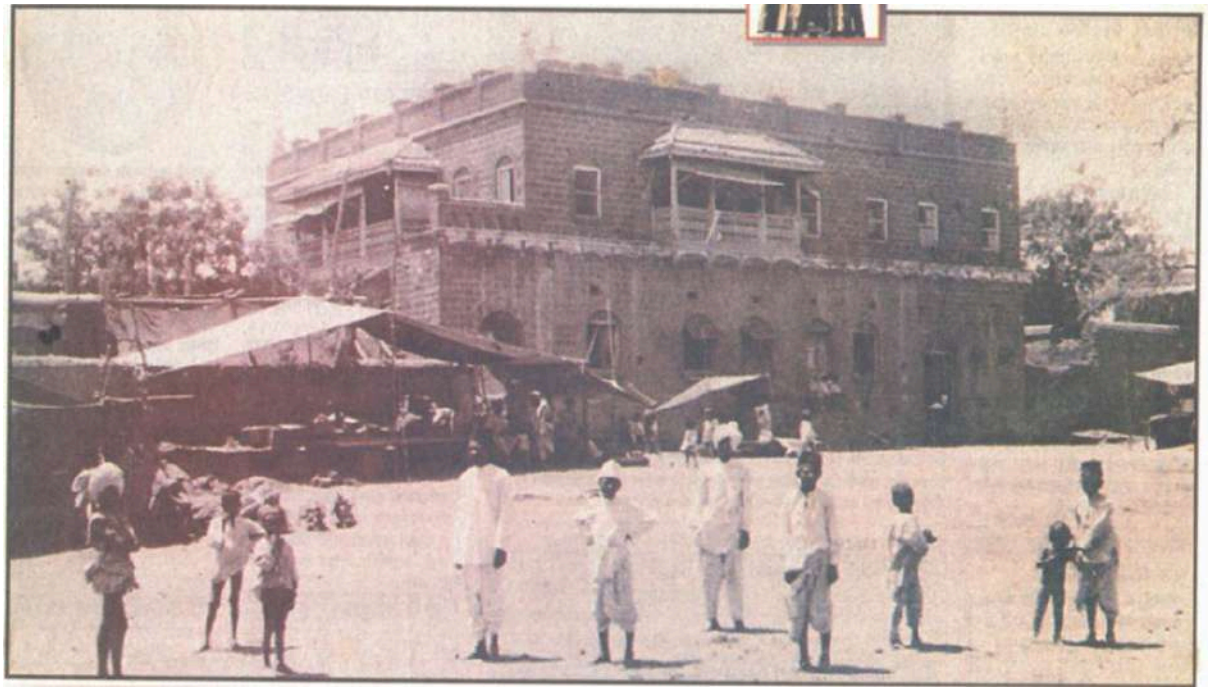
Who was Baba Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj? One of the rare elevated beings who had the good fortune to walk with Shirdi Sai Baba. The only living disciple of Shirdi Sai Baba that we had met. Aged hundred and seven when we met him. Living the life dedicated to spreading his Guru's name and message. An ideal for surrender and devotion to the Guru. Built like an armor tank. No nonsense and in your face when it came to getting Sai Baba's job done. Unconditionally loving and pampering to those of us who came through Mohanji. Nimble like a teenager putting people a quarter of his age to shame. A fountain of blessings that gushed torrents every time we met or called him. Mohanji's meeting Ganeshananda Giri – a superb leela connecting two lifetimes through a bridge of Shirdi Sai Baba's Grace – it simply doesn't get any better than that.

Now the story of how we met this great saint who Mohanji considers a walking Sai Baba in the flesh. In 2015, the trustees of the Sai Baba temple in Palakkad wanted to film a Sai Baba documentary in Malayalam so that the awareness and message of Baba could reach the whole of Kerala and other Malayalam speaking folks overseas. They requested Mohanji to grace it by providing a voice-over for the movie and to introduce key places and stories. Mohanji always makes himself available for any project that promotes the message of Sai Baba. He graciously accepted and came to Shirdi in the second last week of December for the filming. The filming expressed the story of Sai Baba through the different places and people associated with him as mentioned in the Shri Sai Satcharitra. The Shri Sai Satcharitra is the wonderful biography of Sai Baba that details the wonderful life stories of Sai Baba replete with countless miracles performed by Sai Baba. We followed his hallowed footsteps to Nimgaon, Rahata, Sakori, etc and countless places within Shirdi. This was much beyond the usual Shirdi pilgrimage that typically features visits to the Samadhi Mandir, Dwarkamai and other famous spots within the temple complex.

It was an amazing walk down memory lane visiting the places that Sai Baba frequented, as well as places where people closely associated with him like Mhalsapati, Shama, Haji Abdul Baba, Laxmibai Shinde, the Dengles, etc. lived. We heard the stories of Sai Baba as related by the descendents of the few who had the good fortune to be in the close company of Sai Baba. It was like an Easter egg hunt, exploring the Shirdi most people have hitherto never seen before and knowing more of the Sai Baba that we loved and adored. It was really amazing to truly connect to the teachings of Baba by understanding how He led his life in a simple, selfless manner.

One of the afternoons towards the end of the filming, Mohanji got a message and left immediately with some of us to meet "someone". We didn't know anything about the person he was going to meet. We left the hotel on foot, walking past the Sansthan and Dwarakamai towards Gurusthan. With some effort, we located the hotel (Sai Balaji Guest House) where we were supposed to meet the "person". It was in a narrow bylane off one of the roads leading from Gurusthan. It was one of those small cheap functional hotels that mostly serve as a short term "rent a bathroom" facility for people who travel overnight from Mumbai, Pune, etc. and want to quickly do their ablutions before going to the Sai Baba temple. We passed through the narrow space between the two buildings that opened into a small compound that had motorcycles parked on either side. This led to the reception of the hotel which was a

small 3 feet x 7 feet space. When Mohanji spoke to the gentleman at the reception, he pointed Mohanji to the door right behind the reception that opened into a small room.



Old Sai Samadhi Mandir

As the door was opened, we saw an old *sadhu* (renunciate) clad in saffron robes lying on the bed in the room with his head facing the other way. The moment Mohanji came close to the door, the sadhu called out, "*Aavo Mohan*" (Come Mohan) without even looking behind to see who it was. He sat up with great effort and lovingly received Mohanji. Mohanji prostrated at his feet and prepared to sit down on the ground near the bed. But the sadhu lovingly insisted that Mohanji should sit by his side. The person at the reception had told us that the sadhu was not keeping well and was put up in this hotel that belonged to one of his followers. Mohanji enquired about his health. The sadhu told us that he had severe chest congestion and had been hospitalized. The doctors had asked him to immediately get admitted in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit). Yet, he was completely against getting admitted in a hospital since he believed that once someone gets admitted in a hospital, the hospital becomes one's permanent home. 🙂 He got some palliative care from them and headed back to the hotel much to the consternation of the hospital doctors and staff. He was visibly pale and ill; his voice was feeble and hoarse and halting and he was talking with some effort coughing frequently as he talked.

The sadhu then adjusted the pillows, leaned back against the wall and lit a cigarette. He enquired about Mohanji and our group. Mohanji introduced our group to the sadhu. We found out that his name was Baba Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj. He told Mohanji that Sai Baba had told him 3 years ago in Coimbatore that he should meet Mohanji. He just gave him the name but did not tell him anything more about the person. He set about looking for Mohanji but to no avail. He found a couple of other people named Mohan but Sai Baba told

him that they were not the one he was supposed to meet. Finally, after a long search, he gave up resigning to fate that Baba himself would bring them together. And now they finally met! The interesting part is that he had recognised Mohanji even before Mohanji stepped in the room. He lovingly held Mohanji's hand. As time went by, he gradually started feeling better, his voice was more strong and he was a bit more energetic.

He told us his life story and his connection to the great Master Sai Baba of Shirdi. He was one of the two living disciples of Sai Baba. The other one lived in a remote place in the jungles of Madhya Pradesh. He had recently met up with his *guru-bhai* (brother disciple) a few months back. He told us that he came to Shirdi every year typically on the 20th of every December and stayed until a week after the New Year. He liked to start the New Year by taking Sai Baba's blessings and seeking his directions. In the previous year, Babaji had asked Sai Baba permission to take *samadhi* (verb – a saint's conscious exit from the body). Sai Baba told him that Babaji should take samadhi in his own native land of Tamil Nadu. He asked Babaji to build a grand temple for him near Chennai and then take samadhi in the same temple. Babaji decided to make this the largest temple so far replicating all the key spots of Shirdi such as Dwarkamai, Chawadi, Lendi Bagh and others in the temple premises, besides the main shrine for Sai Baba.

This time round, he came in for the New Year a little earlier than usual.

Babaji and Mohanji in deep conversation

Over the next three days, Mohanji met Babaji every evening with our entire group that had assembled at Shirdi. He was not keeping well at all. Yet he felt that he didn't have any time to waste in the hospital. After all, he had a grand temple to build. In spite of his failing health, he would spend extended time with Mohanji and our group lovingly talking and discussing his life details and his lovely stories of Sai Baba. When we got in, he would open his small steel box with Sai Baba's *udi* (sacred ash) which he would apply on Mohanji's forehead and then on our foreheads, showering blessings on each person in the group. He would then order coffee for us in tiny plastic cups from the shop next door and ensure that everyone had one. It was like his *prasad* (consecrated offering) for us along with the nectar of Sai Baba that poured through his words. Babaji told us that his mantra was "*Om Shri Sai Sharanam mama*" (I seek refuge in Sai) which he chanted with his every breath. He made our group chant the mantra along with Him. It was a beautiful experience for all of us. In one of their conversations, Mohanji had opined that a third of the beings (not just humans) would be wiped out due to the change in frequency. He agreed with that assertion and also made several dire predictions that the number of calamities on Earth would increase – both natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, tornados, etc. and man-made ones such as wars, strife, bloodshed, etc.

As the group grew to know him better, people would be all over him – massaging his feet, his legs, his hands, his back, giving energy transfer/*shaktipat*, other healing methods, etc. and trying their best to heal Babaji. And Babaji permitted it all without any obstruction. He said that in the hundred odd years of his life, he had not allowed anyone to sit next to him, touch his body or his feet, let alone massage him. He said it is the miracle of Sai that made him allow everyone to do that here. He allowed our group this privilege because Sai Baba told him, "Mohanji's people are my children. Allow them to do what they want." Similarly, he said, "I walk through these streets outside this hotel. Everyone knows who I am but none dare to talk to me." But here we were mingling so freely with him as if we shared a long and well-established relationship. Babaji would play with Mila as a child even watching her cartoons with a childlike joy. The relationship between Mohanji and Babaji was beautiful – one of unconditional love. He would hold Mohanji's hand and Mohanji would caress and massage his chest and back lovingly. Every time, Mohanji would come back to the hotel, he would be wheezing and gasping for breath in the night.

On the last day, Mohanji and our group went to meet Babaji one last time before we left Shirdi. Babaji could not sit up easily. We learnt that his health had really deteriorated. He was running a high fever, his chest was badly congested and he was frequently running out of breath. He still smoked continuously which was not helping either. He still sat up with quite a bit of effort and help from Mohanji. Mohanji touched and massaged his chest and back. He blessed Mohanji and our group several times and also invited Mohanji to come down to the foundation ceremony of the Sai Baba temple that he was building in the outskirts of Chennai in Sriperumbudur. He also took down Mohanji's address and promised to send Sai Baba's *udi* (holy ash) and leaves from the *neem* (margosa) tree in Gurusthan. The leaves of the neem tree are bitter but the neem tree under which Sai Baba used to sit in Gurusthan has sweet leaves.

Bonds of Unity

On New Year, Babaji would pray to Sai Baba asking for blessings for Mohanji's extended family of followers, well-wishers and acquaintances. He would then send packets to all his extended family with *udi* (sacred ash) and neem leaves from Gurusthan. Mohanji strongly urged Babaji to go to the hospital and he finally agreed. Mohanji also volunteered any assistance required by Babaji during his hospital stay. It was finally time for us to go and we did so with a very heavy heart. Even though we knew Babaji for only 4 days, the love he poured on us bonded us so strongly that leaving him made us feel very sad. On top of it, his failing medical condition made us feel a whole lot worse to leave him in such a condition. Babaji assured us that the people at the hotel would take good care of him and they would take him to the hospital and wait on him there. We finally bid Babaji goodbye and moved on to our respective destinations.

Mohanji and some of our group moved back to the Pune ashram. Mohanji became sick after that and was bedridden in Pune. Since he was suffering from a similar condition as Babaji, we assumed that it might possibly be due to taking over some of the physical ills from Babaji. The same night, Babaji called Mohanji and told him that he was very sick and he would get admitted in the hospital the next day. Mohanji assured Babaji that he was sending someone to take care of Babaji. Mohanji called up the hotel owner (who was Babaji's follower) and also informed him that he was sending someone to take care of Babaji. The hotel owner said that he was going to take Babaji to hospital himself and he had people to take care of him. Hence it would not be necessary.

Mohanji thought it over and said that it was a serious matter. He said that it could be possible that Babaji may be leaving the body soon. Mohanji mentioned that saints continue to do their work even after they take *samadhi* (verb – consciously drop the body). Their *Samadhi* (noun – final resting place) needs to be properly planned as per the work that the saint needs to perform after he leaves the body. The location, position (sitting, standing or lying down),

posture, direction they face, etc. and all other specific details need to be recorded while the saint is in the body. He gave the example of Sri Vittalananda Saraswati (Vittal Babaji) who had built his Samadhi place months before he took samadhi. Vittal Babaji had also asked Mohanji to inspect the Samadhi place to ensure everything was in order. Mohanji also gave the example of another saint who was supposed to be buried but was cremated instead by his family much to the consternation of his disciples. This was because there was no written record of the saint's final wishes. Mohanji mentioned that this affects the saint's future work and journey after Samadhi.

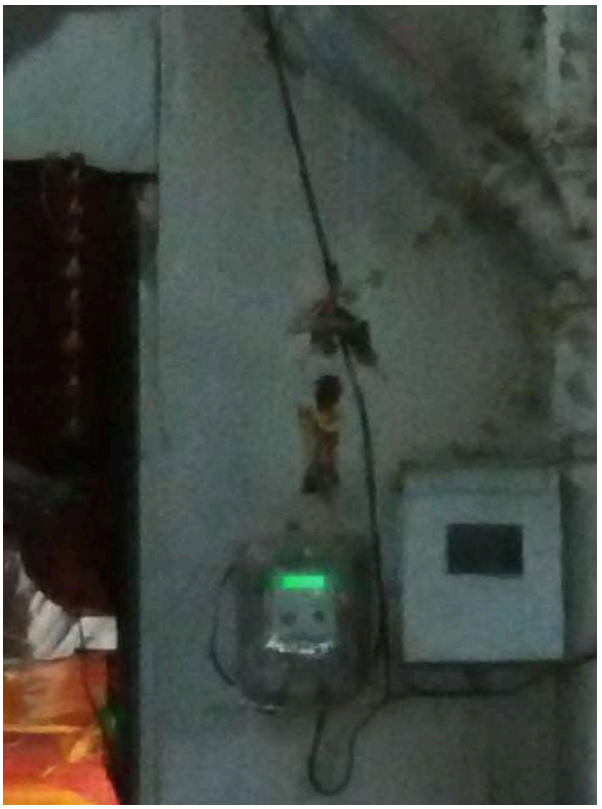
Two Masters in unconditional love

Mohanji asked me to go to Shirdi since he felt that Babaji's people in Shirdi would not know what to do in this situation. Unfortunately, neither could I but I had lifelines available including "Call a Master". 🙂 Mohanji said, "Take care of Babaji as you would take care of me. Stay there as long as it takes until he completely recovers and is on his feet. Do not worry about the hospital expenses. We will take care of everything, if required" At the same time, Mohanji also asked me to find an opportune time before admitting Babaji (or in the hospital) to understand Babaji's wishes and preferences for his samadhi. I was a bit apprehensive about the latter since it was akin to asking someone about their preference for their tombstone on the way to the hospital. In spite of his advanced age, Babaji was built like a military tank. With one well-directed swing of his arm, he could ensure that I would need to note down my Samadhi preferences before posing the question. 🙂 Mohanji remarked that a saint is matter-of-fact in these matters. Death is just an event. They don't get emotional about it. Ask him the question and he will understand. So anyway, with an assuring "Don't worry. I will be with you throughout", Mohanji packed me off to Shirdi.

I packed swiftly, had a quick dinner and set off to the bus stand to take the earliest bus to Shirdi. It must have been around 7-8pm. Luckily, I found a nice sleeper bus (the one you can sleep in horizontally). I lay down wondering about the interesting turn of events and what lay ahead. I couldn't get much sleep on the bus. I reached Shirdi in the wee hours of the morning (around 2:00am or so). I got off the bus and the first thing I noticed was the bus dropped me far off from the usual drop-off point. This meant I would have to lug my luggage on the uneven road (or footpath) for a longer distance. I mentally sent a few choice cuss words their way. I walked some distance before I decided to make peace with the situation by smoking the peace pipe (aka a nice hot tea and a quick smoke). After the smoke break, I enquired with the tea seller on the location of the hotel. To my surprise, the road leading to the hotel was exactly on the opposite side of where the bus stopped! The bus uncannily dropped me to the closest point to Babaji's hotel. So I was basically cursing the shadow of grace that was cast without asking. So often, we resist changes, people, places, events, circumstances, etc. in our ignorance that are truly blessings in disguise bestowed by the One who knows what's really good for us.

After a very short walk to the hotel, I reached the hotel compound. It was quiet and dim with just the light above the reception desk spreading through the compound. It was close to a new moon with a clear blue sky so I could still see clearly. The staff on duty for the night was nicely sprawled on a makeshift bed behind the reception desk and unconscious to external stimuli. The door to Babaji's room was open and I could see him sleeping on the bed. I could hear his hoarse breathing clearly in the compound. I didn't want to wake up Babaji so I decided to just sit and wait it out till he woke up and noticed me. I twiddled my thumbs for a while until I heard Babaji call out loudly, "*Kaun hai waha*?" (Who is outside?). He must have stirred up from sleep and I was caught unawares. I hurriedly mumbled something about Mohanji sending me and started to walk towards his room. He immediately roared, "*Andar mat aana. Bahar hi raho.*" (Don't come inside. Stay out.) This was not the expected response. So I quickly scampered back to my waiting chair, moved it carefully out of sight of Babaji and decided to waited some more.

And I was supposed to ask him about his Samadhi preferences. At this rate, I could use the time to jot down my Samadhi preferences. I hardly do any work while living. Hence, working after death is not very high on my after-I-kick-the-bucket list. 🙂 If I am dead, I'd like to stay dead. Lying down would probably be my only instruction. On a comfy bed if possible. 🙂 🙂 Anyways, I continued with thinking these random thoughts and twiddling my thumbs. I was chanting something to pass the time and I noticed a flower garland that was stuck in a weird way above the electric meter on the opposite wall. It had the shape of a bearded saint under a umbrella or canopy kneeling down and praying. Someone was praying for Babaji. Wonder who it could be? Was it Mohanji? Anyways, my job was to get Babaji to his Samadhi safe and sound. Or so I thought? 🙂 I walked through all the doomsday scenarios and what-if analyses in my mind.



The mysterious praying saint above the glowing electric meter

I then heard Babaji stir up from his sleep and sit up on the bed. He must have seen my shadow outside because he called out again, "*Bahar kaun hai*?" This time I was a bit composed and told him that Mohanji had sent me to be with him. He immediately told me to come and sit inside. I sat down on the floor next to his bed but he didn't allow me. He insisted that the floor was cold and I should sit on the chair. He enquired about my journey and asked me if I needed a room to sleep. I told him that I didn't want to sleep but would prefer to wait there with him. He suggested that I should at least freshen up since I had come from a long journey. He woke up the hotel staff sleeping behind the reception and asked him to arrange for a room for me to freshen up.

The hotel staff asked me if I wanted a good room. I said I didn't care since I just wanted to freshen up. He literally took me on my word. He gave me the key to the room on the ground floor that was behind Babaji's reception room which was used by the hotel staff and possibly half the neighborhood. The room looked like it had been devastated in a warzone. Walking in the bathroom was like walking through a minefield. I spent equal time washing the bathroom with water, being extremely careful to minimize contact with my surroundings, as using it for brushing, bathing, etc. Finally, when I was done, I took my position in the compound outside Babaji's reception room.

This time I was extra careful to keep my chair at a distance to stay out of sight and avoid disturbing Babaji till morning. Interestingly, I had taken Mohanji's words literally and expected Babaji to leave us any instant. My focus was on getting Babaji to his Samadhi. 🙂 Hence, from the point I came to the hotel, I listened attentively to the sound of Babaji's breathing being extra careful if there was a lull or lack of sound. I could even follow his breathing from the room where I was freshening up which was the reason I preferred it in spite of it being dank and dingy. Like all things with Mohanji, this was also going to be a different ride to what my mind had planned or envisaged.

Babaji Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj

Finally, it was morning. Babaji had slept in fits and starts with intermittent long coughing bouts. He was running a high fever and was very frail. He enquired with the hotel staff to check on my whereabouts. I got out of my chair and entered his room. I checked on his health and he said he was not feeling too good. We discussed about his hospitalization and he confirmed that the hotel folks would get him admitted to the hospital late morning. He ordered coffee and breakfast for me. He didn't have any food since he had lost his sense of taste due to the fever. He said he just had a single *idli* (steamed rice pancake) in the morning.

In spite of his illness, he ensured that I was being taken care of. Subsequently, the hotel owner came down to meet Babaji. I took stock of the situation with him on the hospitalization and on the means to get Babaji to the hospital. The narrow roads and by-lanes prevent vehicles from getting to the hotel so we needed to find the closest pickup point that Babaji could walk down. Babaji packed his essential items for the hospital stay and prayed to Sai Baba in the direction of the temple before letting us know that he was ready to leave. Babaji was walking with his stick for support and we were helping him navigate the road to the pickup point. An autorickshaw had been arranged to take Babaji to the hospital while the hotel folks were to reach there on a motorcycle. I went along with Babaji in the autorickshaw to the Shri Sai Superspeciality hospital and was soon joined by the folks from the hotel. We got Babaji into a wheelchair and into the hospital.

Babaji was taken for preliminary diagnosis to the admission area. Babaji was laid down on one of the beds in the admission area for routine tests. While we were waiting there, some people came rushing in with a big elderly lady who had possibly suffered a cardiac arrest. The doctors put her on the bed in front of Babaji and swiftly tried to revive her with a defibrillator a few times before pronouncing her dead. God bless her soul and may she rest in peace. However, the last thing one would expect when they enter the hospital is to be greeted by someone exiting via the aerial route. 🙂 Her relatives were coming to terms with the situation and figuring out the way forward. In the meantime, I put those unsettling circumstances behind and proceeded to push the doctors to finish the tests on Babaji so he could be moved out of the area quickly and into the ICU. Eventually, Babaji was admitted into the ICU for treatment while I spent the rest of the morning and afternoon getting Babaji's admission papers in order and the other formalities.

Devi and Babaji

The doctors immediately commenced on treatment to stabilize Babaji's condition. Babaji was resting most of the time only waking up to have tender coconut water or the food that was being served in the hospital. The doctors were working primarily to stabilize his condition and had not done any diagnosis of the core issue which could happen only after they did the diagnostic tests. Through the day, I kept checking intermittently on Babaji in the ICU and checking on his health. Most of the conversation were through signs or a few words. The odd thought about the Samadhi preferences cropped up but the situation did not permit any further action on it. It was miserable though to be in the ICU since the patients around Babaji were really suffering. Some had tubes sticking through different parts of the body; someone was moaning all the time, some were severely malnourished, etc. It was truly depressing to

go in there every time. Babaji also didn't seem to be like the place too much. The doctors had still not diagnosed the issue but were treating the symptoms to help Babaji gradually recover slowly and surely.

On the morning of the third day, Babaji asked me to get a *batata vada* for breakfast. This was the first time Babaji asked for food which is a welcome sign. Natural hunger is a good sign that the body is recovering. *Batata vadas* are savory potato fritters made by deep frying a potato mash patty coated with chick pea flour. Spicy and yummy! Mohanji loves them too. The best vadas are always available in the small stalls off the street. There is some strange but direct correlation between the amount of sweat and grime pouring off the cook (and possibly getting into the vada), the increased degree of substandard cooking material in use and the lack of hygiene in the stall with the amount of zing that gets added to the vada. This correlation, of course, rapidly tapers off at some point and enters the zone where the consumption of the vada gets one into Delhi belly territory and a possible visit to the doctor. So it is a fine art to use all the five senses to determine the stall that is just right for one's consumption. Of course, deep fried spicy street food in not considered breakfast of champions in the ICU. So it had to be a covert operation to sneak in the vadas to Babaji. In hindsight, giving batata vadas to a recovering ICU patient is not the most logical thing one can do but strangely it seemed right to satisfy the request at that point in time. 🙂 In any case, I managed to get him the vadas of which Babaji relished a couple, which made the effort worthwhile.

Batata vada

The next day Babaji was discharged from the ICU. Babaji wanted a separate room for himself as he chose not to share a room with any other people. We reserved a private room for him with an attached bath and toilet. We dispensed with the usual formalities for exiting the ICU and getting him transferred to the private room. Once Babaji got comfortable in the private room, he asked me to close the door of the room, open all the windows and start the fan in the room. When all was done, he immediately lit up a cigarette using a used teacup with water as a makeshift ashtray. It was at least fascinating for a (then- and now ex-)

smoker to watch someone light up a cigarette in a hospital room the day after coming out of the ICU. Priceless!!! There are things that money can't buy, for the rest… Babaji was one bad-ass monk, I say. 🙂

One point regarding smoking that I would like to cover. People do get confused seeing saints with vices like smoking or drinking. Most of the saints closely associated with Mohanji like Shri Vittalananda Saraswati (Vittal Babaji), Baba Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj (Babaji), Avadhoota Nandanandaji were/are heavy smokers. Even Shirdi Sai Baba smoked a chillum (pipe) regularly. Mohanji explained that there are different reasons that a saint chooses to smoke – to feel the body, to work out karma, etc. Mohanji had mentioned that at one point in time during his sadhana, he could not feel his body at all and he would chain smoke almost 40 cigarettes a day just to feel his body. Avadhoota Nadanandaji once said, "There is a difference between our frequencies. If I choose to stay in mine, I will be in bliss and you will not be able to understand me at all. Hence, I have to contaminate my body to bring it down to your level so we can have a conversation." Shankar Maharaj, a powerful Nath saint from Maharashtra used to drink and the people sitting in front of him would get tipsy. One person remarked that when a person who was disturbed visited Vittal Babaji, he tended to smoke a lot more than usual (as a way to burn karma). It is best not to analyze why saints do certain things in the absence of having the wider view into the grand scheme of things that is afforded to them. Mohanji did mention that disciples who imitated the Masters in this respect don't receive any esoteric benefits – they just become addicts. 🙂

The next day Mohanji, Devi, Mila and a few others were leaving Pune to go to Dhar (near Indore) to meet Avadhoota Nadanandaji for the first time. Mohanji decided to take a detour via Shirdi to meet Babaji. They arrived in the afternoon. Babaji was very glad to see Mohanji. This time Babaji was in much better shape than he was in Shirdi hotel where they met earlier. Mohanji was also seemingly in better health than when I left him in Pune. Mohanji enquired of his health and took an understanding of how the treatment was progressing. He also mentioned his travel plans to Babaji to go to Dhar and then head from there to Bangalore. He reiterated to Babaji that he had left me there to be at Babaji's service for as long as it took Babaji to regain full health. He also asked Babaji to take complete rest and not to worry about anything including the temple project and to focus only on nursing himself back to health. After spending a of hours with Babaji, Mohanji and the group took Babaji's leave to proceed onwards to Bangalore. Babaji blessed the entire group by applying sacred ash on their forehead and he blessed them a safe journey.

Mila giving a get well soon kiss to Babaji

Babaji was responding well to the treatment because he was getting better each day. He still needed rest and medication to completely recover and the doctors had not been able to do a proper diagnosis. The doctors recommended different tests to understand the scope of the problem and to help them diagnose it. My routine was also pretty much the same – arranging for food for Babaji like breakfast, tender coconut water, fruits, etc., getting the medicines as requested by the nurses, understanding the course of action from the doctors who came on the rounds, arranging for the tests to be done as requested by the doctors, etc. Doing whatever little I could to make him comfortable. Towards the end, Babaji also got the hotel folks to get me a scooter so it would be more comfortable for me to travel around Shirdi. Babaji was keeping tabs on me and ensuring my comfort all the time.

Two group of devotees came down from Chennai. The first was a group of students and the other were trustees from the Datta Siva Sai trust in Chennai who were responsible for building the temple in Chennai. They spent time with Babaji, enquired of his health, took his blessings and left. The nurses soon got wind of Babaji's smoking in the room and soon the doctors did as well. Once one of the doctors scolded Babaji saying, "You don't smoke in your temple. Do you? This is our temple. Then how can you smoke in ours?" He further continued on the ill effects of smoking and how it impeded Babaji's recovery. He requested him to at least discontinue the habit in the hospital. I was outside when it happened. Babaji was sitting quietly like a child who had just been scolded. He told me, "*Doctor ne mujhe khub danta.*" (the doctor scolded me a lot) He told me that he had tried to quit several times but it always came back to him. He also put it up to Sai Baba to help him quit but it never happened. He finally just accepted it as something he had to live with. He said, "Let them scold. I can't do much about it." So he asked me to close the door, open the windows, etc. and lit up a cigarette to mull over it. 🙂

I had one observation during my stay at the hospital. People love to trouble saints when they need help for all of their issues, even the seemingly minor and insignificant. They expect the saints to drop everything and bend over backwards to help them out. However, when it comes to helping a saint or doing his work, the same people cannot be troubled to step beyond the comfortable or share beyond the most basic. The feelings or emotions on display at the saint's distress are not congruent with the help and support that is actually offered. More so, people still force their way to meet him for their petty interests without regard to giving a convalescing saint time to recover. I have also seen this repeatedly with people around Mohanji as well. Even when they know that he is unwell, they force their way to have him cater to their selfish requests without the slightest sensitivity to his condition. People should understand that even though saints are beyond the body, they still have to take care of their body or suffer a shorter lifespan.

Babaji blessing Mohanji

I didn't bother Babaji much during his stay in the hospital to avoid putting any strain on him. But I did happen to ask him his life story which I present below. I mostly committed it to memory and didn't write anything down. Hence, a disclaimer that all mistakes are entirely due to my errors in memory, comprehension or writing.

He was born in the South of India near Kanyakumari. Babaji's age at that point in time was 107 years old. Hence, his year of birth must be around 1908. At the time of his birth, his grandmother was told in a vision by Lord Subramanya that this child was meant for the world and not for the household. At the age of 4 years old, he was taken to the Tirupati Balaji temple for a ritual tonsuring of his hair. This ritual is generally performed on young children to symbolise the surrender of the ego to the Lord. He saw a vision of Lord Subramanya who told Him it was time to leave the family and asked him to start walking. The 4 year old child walked until he came to a Lord Hanumanji temple and stayed there for 6 months. Then, Hanumanji appeared in front of Him and asked Him to proceed to Shirdi to meet the great Master Sai Baba of Shirdi. He somehow managed to reach Shirdi which is approximately

1200kms away. How could a 4 year old child accomplish this task? This was obviously Divine play at work.

He met Sai Baba in Shirdi who took him under His wings. Once when Sai Baba was distributing candies from his bag to all the children, He did not give anything to the young Babaji. Upset by this, the young Babaji put his hand in Sai Baba's bag, took some candies and ate them. Sai Baba got upset with this act and slapped the young boy. The young Babaji went away crying to Shama's house. Shama was one of the oldest disciples of Shirdi Sai Baba who was deeply devoted to Sai Baba. Sai Baba never refused Shama anything. So people who could not get Sai Baba's favour or grace would always go to Shama to place their request before Sai Baba. When Sai Baba didn't see the young Babaji for 4 days, Sai Baba asked Shyama, "Where is that small boy who was here?" Shama said, "He is in my house and is afraid to come near you." Sai Baba asked Shyama to get the boy to Dwarkamai.

Shama told the young Babaji that Sai Baba had asked for him and that he should accompany Shama to Dwarkamai. The young Babaji refused to go back to Sai Baba and told Shama, "Buddha marta hai." (That old geezer beats me) 🙂 Shama convinced the young Babaji that the slap was indeed out of love and not out of anger. When a Guru hits you like that, it benefits you in various ways and you are very special. He convinced him to go back to Sai Baba. After that, Sai Baba would share many things with him. He was around ten years old when Baba attained His Mahasamadhi (a master's conscious exit from the body). There is a famous photo of Sai Baba with the young Ganeshananda Giri. Shyama had gifted him his new clothes. Shama is next to Baba in the brown coat holding Sai Baba. Shama is 60 plus in the picture.

Sai Baba in the Chavadi procession. Babaji is the small boy on the left holding the staff

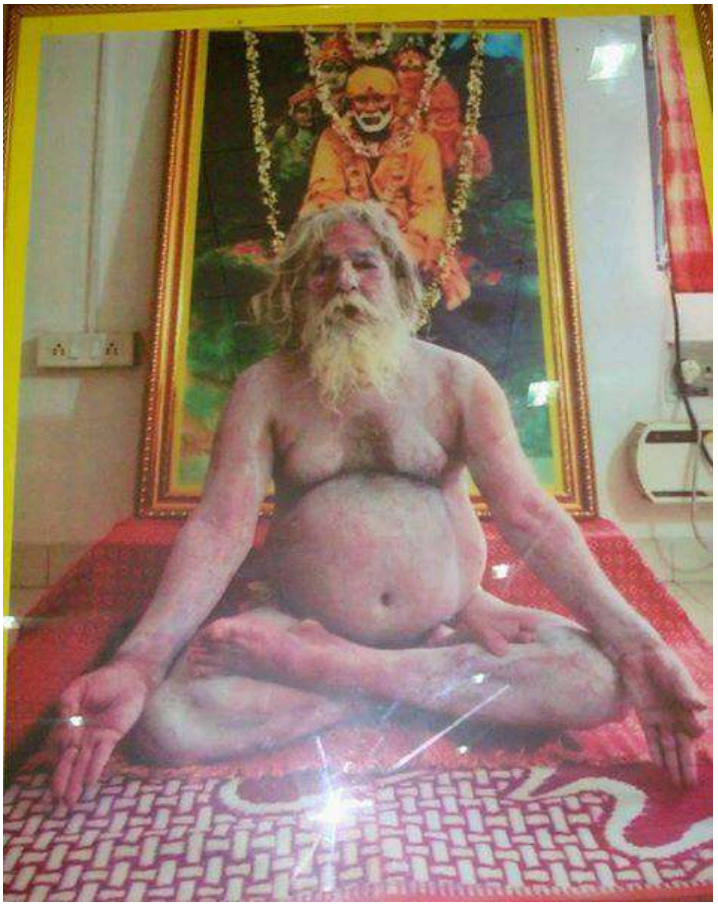
The young Babaji continued to stay in Shirdi after Sai Baba's mahasamadhi under the protection of Shama and others. Once during his teens (after Baba's mahasamadhi), He prayed to Sai Baba, "You are a powerful Master and can grant any wish. I want a motorcycle, a car, twenty million rupees and a swanky bungalow." Saying this, he took the flowers kept on Sai Baba's samadhi in a small gunny bag to his dwelling fully expecting the flowers to manifest into His objects of desire. He slept with the gunny bag by his side dreaming of going to Mumbai and living a life of luxury once his wishes were granted. In the morning, the flowers were still there in the gunny bag and there was nothing else even closely resembling his wish. 🙁 Frustrated, he went to Sai Baba's samadhi and berated Him as being useless for not fulfilling his wish.

Still, he continued doing Sai Baba's seva (service) out of his love for Baba. Around his early twenties, he was walking in the jungles around Shirdi and saw Sai Baba in the flesh walking ahead of him. Then Sai Baba came towards him. He was surprised since Sai Baba had taken mahasamadhi many years ago. Sai Baba called him near and the young Babaji was convinced that it was actually Sai Baba. Sai Baba asked him if he remembered the wishes he had made in his teen years. He told Baba remorsefully, "Of course, I remember. You didn't grant any of them". Sai Baba told him, "Now it is time I grant those wishes. Are you ready?" The young Babaji told Sai Baba that he was ready. Sai Baba told him, "Those two legs I gave you are your motorcycle. The body I gave you is your car. The brain I have given you is worth twenty million rupees. And the world is your bungalow. I have kept you in Shirdi thus far so that you become capable of doing My work in the world. Now it is time for you to leave Shirdi and do My work in the world."

With the blessings of Sai Baba, he travelled through the Himalayas spreading the holy word of Shirdi Sai Baba. He also took sannyasa (vows of renunciation) in the Shri Panchadashanam Juna Akhara of the Dashanami Naga. He narrated an incident during his Himalayan travels. He accepted the hospitality of a big group of Naga sadhus. As they were seated together, he happened to mention that Sai Baba was his Guru and he extolled the virtues of his Guru. The Naga sadhus got incensed that he was praising a Muslim fakir in their midst and all of them got up to attack him. They were almost 500 in number. He sensed the inevitable and prayed deeply to his Guru. Soon, the chief of the group came out when he heard the commotion. He chastised the group and said, "You have no idea of his Guru's stature. No one will dare touch him." Babaji said that when you are truly surrendered to the Guru, no one could dare touch even a hair on your body.

On his travels, he ventured into Solan in Himachal Pradesh. Sai Baba told him to build His temple on one of the mountains there. He engaged several experts from Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and other states. Every one of them told him that it was an impossible task to build since it was 100ft of solid rock topped with 60ft of loose sand. He complained to Sai Baba that even the experts have given up and He did not know how to proceed. Sai Baba told Him bluntly, "What is the purpose of your birth? Why have I brought you up? If you can't find anyone to build it, then you build it yourself". With the Guru's clear directions, the young Babaji took the tools himself and set out on his task to tame the mountain. He would engage whatever labourers he could find but the local contractors would invariably lure the labourers away telling them that the crazy Swami would not be able to pay them anything. In spite of

all these hardships, he toiled single handedly with whatever help he could muster and even going it alone if there was no one to help.



Babaji as Solan Maharaj

He carved out the mountain and then used the same stones to build the pillars of the temple. In a few years, he built a grand temple for Sai Baba there on the mountain as per the wishes of His Guru Sai Baba. He takes no credit for this amazing achievement. He proclaims it to be a testament to the will and power of His Guru to do what others said could not be done. He is also well known as Solan Maharaj in these parts. Since then he has built 15 temples of Sai Baba in various parts of India and consecrated and installed countless Sai Baba idols in various temples in India. He has also been instrumental in setting up temples of other deities in various parts of India. He considers himself to be only an instrument of his Master Shirdi Sai Baba's will and considers his only purpose in life is to do his Master's will.

After a week in the hospital, the doctors diagnosed Babaji's problem as damage to the lungs due to fibrosis. They surmised that this was due to his long winded smoking habit. Further, they said that the damage in most cases was irreversible and the medication would only help in treating the symptoms. They said that they did not have the capabilities to do a treatment for the problem and he would have to go to one of the larger cities where such facilities were

available. At the same time, they suggested that his condition was fairly stable and it would be perfectly fine for him to travel to another city and start his treatment there.

So they suggested that they were agreeable to discharge him from the hospital. Babaji was also raring to leave the hospital since he wanted to get back very soon to his grand Sai Baba temple project. We completed the discharge formalities and Babaji returned back to the Sai Balaji guest house from the hospital. Babaji wasn't happy about the hospitalization expenses. He would have much rather preferred to use every single rupee for the temple project. He tried everything possible including speaking to the hospital director to reduce the hospitalization expenses. Of course, it was quite obvious to us that it was a worthwhile investment since without Babaji's force, drive and energy, the temple project could not be sustained at all.

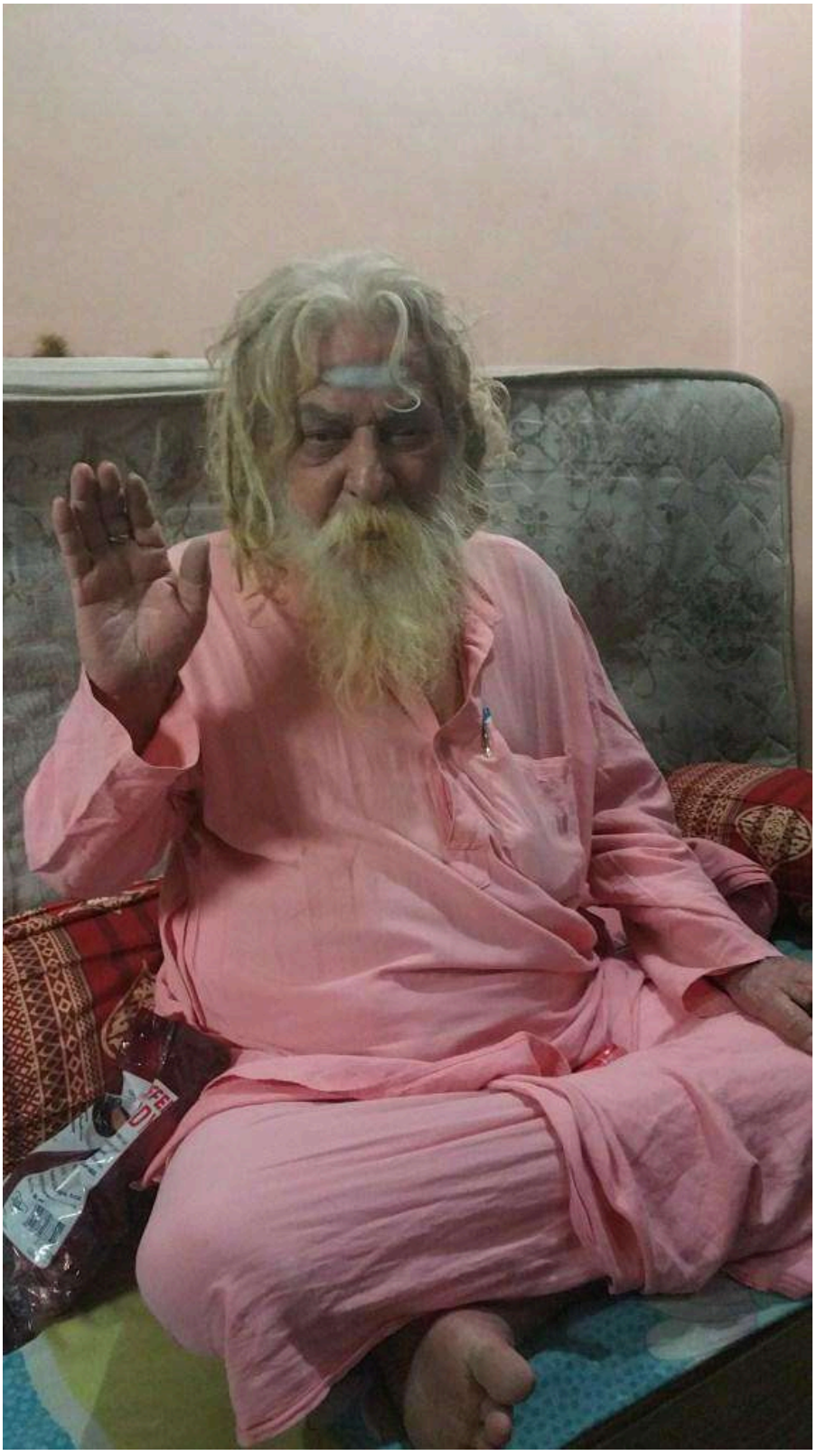
I met Babaji regularly over the next couple of days to check on him. Babaji was back to his usual room #3 on the first floor of the Sai Balaji Guest House. The first day there was no hot water in the hotel so Babaji could not take a bath. He was really looking forward to it since he could not take a bath in the hospital all this while due to the intravenal equipment on his hands. He was still very happy to be back in the hotel and out of the hospital. I asked him about his plans and if he would prefer to go back to Chennai immediately as suggested by the doctors. Babaji suggested that he would stay the course as he had planned earlier, i.e., to be in Shirdi till the first week of January. He would take Sai Baba's blessings around the New Year and do the usual routine he followed of seeking blessings for his extended family.

Babaji blessing Mohanji

He said he liked this place because you could clearly see the gopuram of the Shirdi Sai Baba Temple from his room and the reception. Babaji said that the gopuram of a temple is right above the idol. So you can pray to the gopuram and the message will directly reach the idol. He said he does that most of the time at Shirdi and his prayer reaches Baba. He said a lot of people did not know about this. He suggested to sit near Haji Abdul Baba's kutir when you get a chance and pray to the gopuram from there. He asked me about my plans. I told him that I was willing to wait with him for as long as it was required. He suggested that I could leave the following day. He said that the temple trust folks were sending his helper from Chennai to Shirdi and he would be able to manage with him around. That night, I did spend some time at Haji Abdul Baba's kutir looking at the gopuram of the Shirdi Sai temple. It has a beautiful view of the top of the temple.

The following day, I went to see Babaji before leaving Shirdi. He was in a chatty mood. He was talking about the dharma of a sanyasi. He said it can be summed up in, "*Kam bolna, Kam sona, Kam khana*" (Less talk, Less sleep, Less food) and "Let all get water and food before me" (others before self). He said that there are four types of Gurus. One is like water. All animals – dogs, cats, pigs, etc. – drink water. All religions, all castes drink water. Gives to everyone as per their desire. One is like a flower who gives fragrance to everyone. One is like an alchemist who makes his disciple like himself. One is like fire who makes his disciples walk on fire – follow the orders without question.

He said that hundreds of thousands of Sai Baba's children come from far and wide to meet Sai Baba. Sometimes, the security folks are very rude to them which makes him very sad. He would sometimes fight with them and make them apologize. He looked at the ring on my finger and suggested that whenever you wear a deity on the ring (or necklace), make sure they are not hanging upside down when the hand (or necklace) is hanging down. After our association, I was really finding it hard to say goodbye. As the time to depart came close, I prostrated at his feet, took his blessings and his permission to leave Shirdi. I left for Bangalore via Mumbai. On the way to Mumbai, grace ensured I found a sleeper bus and a nice isolated seat where I could be undisturbed. I reminisced over the amazing week that went by and deep gratitude flowed towards Mohanji for his immense, benevolent grace to allow me to be a part of it.



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Videos

Jeeva samadhi of Sri Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj(23 min);

https://youtu.be/9gKKEE_pnEY?si=mmV8pzU0giVFJ85H

Babba Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj (7 min):

https://youtu.be/lFeoK4VK2Oo?si=Y6Jw33igLXiSqCzE

Mohanji meets the boy who walked with Sri Sai Baba (9 min):

https://youtu.be/rZLWMOeSXAw?si=WFCCkfwYtCrlGZfu

Sri Ganeshananda Giri Maharaj (31 min):

https://youtu.be/Ole_1wUVpLI?si=ZbtWzfSIb1EcXRgF

Palki of Sri Sai Baba :

https://www.facebook.com/share/v/195NNPN5EQ/

Sri Ganeshananda Giri chant (15 min):

https://youtu.be/3TQZK_5iRPs?si=0Z-5MRZLp2S6XvEp

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Note: At the end of this ebook, two pages are included (see below), giving (I) Author info, and (ii) a master link and QR code to download all my Technical (viz. Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, and Cryogenic Engineering) ebooks plus Spiritual ebooks, stored in archive.org.

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About the Author

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar is a Mechanical Engineer with specialization in Cryogenics. He obtained his B. E. In Mechanical Engineering from Karnataka Regional Engg College, (Now NITK), Surathkal, India and M.Sc. in Cryogenics from the University of Southampton, U.K., and Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

He has worked in prestigious organizations such as BARC, Bombay and Centre for Advanced Technology (CAT), Indore,as Head of Cryogenics Dept and contributed to the design of cryogenic systems, including the Thermovac chamber for ISRO, Bangalore.

He was also a visiting fellow at Superconducting Super Collider Project, at Texas, USA.

He has also served as Professor, Head of Department, and Principal in reputed engineering institutions.

Dr. Thirumaleshwar has authored a large number of FREE ebooks on Engineering subjects such as Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, and Cryogenic Engineering, which are useful for students and teachers.

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All his ebooks are available for free download at Archive.org.

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Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar
July 29, 2026

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